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## U.S. Reassesses Composition of Enemy's Forces

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 19 — Infiltration from North Vietnam has been so heavy since the beginning of this year that about two-thirds of the men in main-force enemy units in South Vietnam are now believed to be native North Vietnamese, according to Administration sources.

The main-force units consist of the regular North Vietnamese Army elements in the South and the Vietcong regular battalions, regiments and divisions, as distinct from the more lightly armed guerrilla formations. The total of troops in both types of units is about 160,000 men, the sources said. About 100,000 to 110,000 are now believed to be native northerners.

About 80,000 of the northerners are in the regular North Vietnamese Army units and about 20,000 to 30,000 have been placed in Vietcong regular units as replacements for casualties.

The remaining 50,000 to 60,000 men in Vietcong regular formations are recruited in the South or so-called regroupees. The regroupees are men who went to North Vietnam in 1954 after the Geneva accords divided Vietnam at the 17th Parallel and were later infiltrated back into the South. They are considered to be native southerners.

### Growth Is Steady

While the percentage of northerners in the main-force units has been growing steadily since 1965, American officials believed as recently as last November that southerners still outnumbered them. At that time, the Administration estimated the total main-force strength at 118,000 men — 54,000 North Vietnamese and 64,000 Vietcong.

The losses during the enemy Lunar New Year offensive and the great infiltration that has followed have changed the balance, the sources said.

Many of the senior officers and other leaders in the regular Vietcong units are native Southerners who went north in 1954, the sources said, and who

### Northerners Now Believed Preponderant in the South Due to Heavy Infiltration

thus help to maintain the southern identity of the units. The bulk of the northerners in the Vietcong are ordinary soldiers.

But most of the regroupees are also members of the South Vietnamese Communist party, and this enables Hanoi to exercise control.

The sources said it was impossible to delineate the total enemy main-force strength and the number of northerners in the main-force elements sharply because of combat losses and replacement through infiltration and recruitment. They said, however, that a fair measurement would be that two-thirds of the men were northerners.

They said that, according to preliminary and still unrefined evidence, the infiltration from North Vietnam since Jan. 1 had been on an unprecedented scale.

Estimates vary from 40,000 to 55,000 men, but all sources

agree that the infiltration has been very high and that there has been no indication of a significant decrease since President Johnson's restriction of the bombing of North Vietnam on March 31.

The estimates include men who have actually entered South Vietnam and those still on their way through southeastern Laos.

According to one estimate, about 20,000 men entered the South or started through Laos in January, roughly 10,000 in February, about 15,000 in March and about 10,000 so far in April.

The North Vietnamese are also now moving men through Laos by truck, rather than having them undertake a long march, in order to get them to the fighting areas sooner, the sources said. Trucks filled with troops have been sighted moving through the Mugia Pass from North Vietnam into Laos and as far south as the Laotian town of Tchepone.

Most of the infiltration so far, the sources believe, has been designed to replace losses incurred during the Lunar New Year offensive and the siege of Khesanh.